THE PORT FOLIO,

(NEW SERIES)

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

Various, that the mind of desultory man, studious of change and pleased with novelty, may be indulged—Cowp.

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ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For The Port Folio.

LETTERS FROM GENEVA AND FRANCE.

Written during a residence of between two and three years in different parts of those countries, and addressed to a lady in Virginia.

——quâ me quoque possim
Tollere humo. VIR.

TRAVELS—LETTER I.

Geneva, December 14th, 1803.

My dear E——,

IT is high time I should begin the account I promised you, of our travels, or my materials, which are every day increasing, would swell it to the size of a volume; for I have never suffered a day to pass, without inserting in my common place book, whatever occurred to me worth remarking, and it is from that I shall write to you, so that you will be able to judge of the impressions of the moment upon my mind, as if I had written to you at the moment.

You must remember, how long it is since I have talked of an excursion to France, and the satisfaction I expressed, when, from a variety of circumstances, I could flatter myself that the time was at length arrived for putting my plan in execution: my heart beat however with agitation, when I was informed, that the captain we wished to go with, and who had been long expected, had at length arrived, and that it was necessary to come to a final decision; the gloomy shade, the damp air, and the musquitoes of H., and above all the dread of impending sickness at that season of the year, contributed extremely to the alacrity of our preparations, and it was with very great satisfaction, that at one o'clock on the 23d of July we found ourselves on board of the John and Francis, commanded by Captain J. Baas, then under weigh, with a light breeze from the South West: you may remember my informing you of the Captain's request to his passengers that they would consent to put into Newport for a day or two, and how fortunate I thought myself in the opportunity it would afford me of seeing my brother: but I was far from supposing that the land of Rhode-Island would present itself to us so soon; the wind was however so fair and it blew so fresh, that we made

Block-Island early on the morning of the 26th, and had it not been that the breeze died away towards the evening, a change of place, which would have required at least five weeks by land, might have been effected in very little more than four times four-and-twenty hours.

After a stay of four days at Newport, we again embarked: the wind was as fair as our Captain could wish, all sails were hoisted, and in a very few hours we lost sight of the American shore: let me however, before I leave America in my narration, inform you that I found Newport improved since I had seen it; the harbour bespoke an appearance of business, and was enlivened by two Indiamen, a ship of war, and several merchant vessels; the long spoken of and long wished for Long Wharf, had been rebuilt, the streets no longer looked like grassy lanes; some houses had been repaired and painted, and the melancholy figures of decayed masters of vessels, wrapped up in their long cloaks, and looking like shadowy attendants upon the ghost of departed Commerce, were no more to be seen in groups: if to the smiles of returning prosperity, you add the comfort of good air, the eharms of a beautiful situation, the society of intelligent obliging people, numbers of pretty faces, the concourse of strangers from different parts of the world, and a plenty, upon very easy terms, of every thing desirable, you will agree with me, that no place seems better adapted than Newport to such a retreat, as one might wish for at a certain time of life. Use, which reconciles men to all things, the ties of kindred, the wish, so natural to a parent, of establishing his children in the world, and a variety of other circumstances, flowing all of them from the goodness and wisdom of Providence, keep us ultimately attached to our several stations on the globe; were Reason alone, free from those useful and therefore necessary prejudices which cleave to the human heart, to be attended to, half Carolina surely would remain uninhabited, and the pestiferous exhalations of our swamps be exchanged for the wholesome atmosphere of Rhode-Island.

During the little time we remained at Newport, many of our old acquaintances found us out, and appeared glad to see us, and I had an opportunity of forming in the person of Mr. Lequinio Kerblay a new acquaintance, which I think of with pleasure: the letters he gave me for his friends and correspondents in France, have been of essential service to us; this gentleman resides at Newport as commercial agent of France, the name of consul, being now destined for higher purposes, and consequently withdrawn from common use, as that of emperour was among the Romans; there is but little probability that this letter of mine will go down to posterity, but if it should, I hope Posterity will take my word for it, that Mr. Lequinio whom it will know as an authour, was at the same time a man of warm affections, and of honourable sentiments. He may have been misled, he indeed certainly was, in the maze of publick affairs, when the reason of the whole nation seems for an interval to have been suspended, when abject fear, strangely combined with political enthusiasm, took place of every sentiment of justice and honour, and even of humanity; but he sooths himself, I presume, with the idea that his intentions were good, whilst he sighs no doubt in honest sincerity of heart over the horrours of what is irretrievably past.

We had sailed from Newport on the first day of August; on the 4th we crossed what the seamen call the tail of the great bank of Newfoundland, and on the 11th found ourselves by observation off Corvo, one of the Azores. Until now, the voyage had gone on, not only tolerably, but I might almost say, delightfully; I had converted the roundhouse on deck which was assigned to a part of our family, into a more comfortable ha-

bitation, than you would suppose possible from the dimensions; our books had been drawn out, we were now so reconciled to the motion of the vessel as to be able to read, though a little reading, as some one has observed, goes a great way at sea, and we thought ourselves fast approaching France; our fellow passengers meanwhile, seemed disposed to be pleased, the Captain was good humoured, liberal, and attentive, the vessel well found, and the crew alert, in high discipline, and happy. We now and then spoke a vessel from Europe, and whilst we ran from them with all sails spread, and sheltered from the sun under our awning, we could not but pity those, who, from all appearance, were so much less fortunate than ourselves. But a voyage by sea, is but an epitome of human life, the fairest hopes are sometimes succeeded by disappointment, and we feel ourselves under the control of a power, which acts from causes far beyond our comprehension: scarcely had we got as we supposed abreast of Corvo, than a North East wind rushed out upon us, as some monstrous giant is described in an old romance sallying out from his castle upon the way-worn traveller; our good vessel, however, was not to be so easily overcome, and during three weeks which ensued of boisterous weather, of hard gales, and of seas, which without going as high or descending as low, as the poets pretend, were still high enough to have alarmed a landsman, I do not recollect a moment of even transient uneasiness: there were two or three young people on board, besides those of our family, and all of them were rather amused at the temporary confusion, occasioned sometimes by the breaking of the sea upon the main deck, whilst cards, or chess, or whatever else amused the passengers went on undisturbed. With some desire to make mutual sacrifices for the general good in those who are fellow passengers, five or six weeks at sea may be very well and particularly if the Captain is a goodnatured man; I have known some who ceased to be so as soon as they got off of soundings, who changed their manners with the wind, and laid aside their complaisance with their fair weather clothes, but this was far from being the case with ours, who was as civil to his passengers and as conversable in bad weather and with a head wind, as when every sail was spread; it was impossible to keep a more plentiful table, and his conversation, though he had never received the advantages of a liberal education, was amusing, sometimes even instructive, inasmuch as it contained views, and descriptions of human life, which were new to me, and always goodnatured: he had begun as a common seaman before the mast, had gone through the sad variety of wo which a seaman's life in unwholesome climates, and in time of war is exposed to, had once or twice been stripped of all he had acquired, but was now in honest possession as owner of the fine vessel which he commanded as captain, and owned half the cargo. In the course of the unfortunate part of his adventures, he had been confined on board the prison ship off the Jersey shore, that ship out of which such numbers were buried, and when so favoured, after seven months, as to be allowed to procure an exchange, he declared to me, (so powerful is the force of custom in some minds,) that it was with a sensation not altogether removed from regret, that he had seen himself rowed away from the side of the vessel. We were speaking one evening of a merchant, of his acquaintance in Charleston, as one who by industry and by integrity had raised himself in the world, who now lived comfortably in the enjoyment of all that he could wish, and with great hospitality. He had wandered it seems from a distant part of Europe to London, as to a place where money was to be easily made, and had for a long time struggled with difficulties and disappointment, when leaning one evening

against a post, at the corner of an obscure street, and ruminating on his sad fortune, he was addressed by a lame beggar, on whom he had sometimes bestowed charity, who, availing himself of the sort of equality, which there seemed to be in their fortune, exhorted him to hope for better times, and offered him, it was all he had, his advice, and the advice of a man of experience and influence to whom he promised to introduce him: the beggar had for some years it seems, served as boatswain on board of a ship, the captain of which was now a merchant of great respectability, who remembered him as a humble friend, and treated him with kindness, it was to this gentleman that the beggar introduced his benefactor, now become his *protogè*, nor was the introduction fruitless, for it led to an establishment in Carolina, where in a very few years he became partner in a commercial house and made his fortune. It was thus in various conversation that we would frequently pass an hour or two upon deck, when it blew hard of an evening and when the passengers, who occupied the cabin, were gone below. Of these, there were none from whom something might not be learned, and I do not think it possible for any set of people to have lived together more peacefully than we did.

Notwithstanding the perseverance of the wind, which hardly ever varied from the North East, we found ourselves gaining to the Eastward, and were not very far from the Bay of Biscay, when one morning a vessel was seen a head, lying to, as if waiting for us: she soon began to make sail, however, described a semicircle round us, as if to examine our strength, got in our wake, made for us, and though our vessel sailed remarkably fast was so near that we could discern her to be a lugger of fourteen guns and full of men; the Captain finding that they were determined to speak us, ordered the sails a-back, and we waited their approach. To perceive a black-sided armed vessel rigged in a manner differently from any I had ever seen, for I had never seen a lugger before, bringing her broadside to bear so as to throw a shot a-head of us, and then ranging along side; with the dirty caps of their men, and the ends of muskets sticking up, and to hear no sound aboard of them, but that of a whistle, was a combination of circumstances which conjured up a number of disagreeable ideas in my mind, whilst I was compelled to affect tranquillity, in order to dispel, as far as possible, the fears of others. They had at first shown French colours, but were now under British, and we were waiting to see what colours they would show next, when we heard the word of command given in English and saw them put their boat out, and row aboard of us. We were now convinced that it was an English privateer, and though the sailors were of a worse appearance than I supposed the nation could have produced, yet the officers were well-looking, well-behaved men with even an affectation of politeness: a very short inquiry seemed to convince them that the ship and cargo were American, and they had the humanity to spare the trunks of the French passengers, whose distress at their approach had not been inconsiderable; "we make war upon you," said one of the officers to the poor Frenchmen, "but we are not robbers."

(*To be continued.*)

For The Port Folio.

A TREATISE ON ORIENTAL POETRY.

(*Continued from page* 70.)

SECTION IV.

Of their Elegies.

We find no Elegies in the Persian collections and very few in the Turkish. The second book of Hamassa, or a collection of Arabian Poems, consists in short Elegies, written with all the majesty of poetry. As we may

judge by the following, composed upon the death of a warriour, no less celebrated for his liberality than by his valour.

"Come, my companions, come to the Tomb of Maan, and say; may the clouds of morning bathe thee with their frequent showers.

But thou! Oh tomb of Maan, which wast only one of the cavities of the Earth, how art thou become the dwelling of Liberality?

And how Oh tomb of Maan! dost thou enclose that Liberality which filled the Earth and the Sea?

Yes, thou hast received within thy bosom, Liberality herself, but she is dead, for if she lived thou couldst not contain her without bursting.

The memory of young Maan lives after him, as the field receives a new verdure after having been watered by a clear brook.

But alas! Maan is dead, Liberality has disappeared from the Earth; the beautiful flower of generosity is mercilessly mowed down!"

We find in an excellent Poem of Abu Arabachah a passage, which separated from the rest composes a very beautiful Elegy on the death of the sons of Tamerlane. as follows:

"Where are ye, young Heroes, whose countenances shone like the leaves of the Sacred book? where are they whose riches, learning, and virtues, rendered them so celebrated, who extinguished the moon of the heavens, and caused the waves of the ocean to be ashamed? The fatal gusts of destruction, have driven them away, as the western wind disperses the sand. Where are those amiable Princes, the light and the joy of all hearts, who after the veil which concealed them was lifted, shone like the Sun issuing from a cloud? Where are those large-eyed Antelopes, those Roebucks like the Nymphs of Paradise, whom beauty had *wrapped up* in the flowered robe of contentment, who were the eyes of the world and the light of its eyes, who were the borders of the gardens, and the flowers of those borders? when they were enlivened with pleasure and darted amorous looks; when their years were blooming and decked with the freshness of gilded buds; then it was that Death, that fatal cupbearer poured the wine of destruction into their cups, and with his overflowing rivers, inundated the garden of their lives. They left their sumptuous palaces to bury themselves in the narrow tombs, presenting the bitter beverage of separation to their companions, who overcame with grief, tore their hair and beat their breasts. Ah! if the prayers of the afflicted tribes could have any influence over death, he would have restored them these objects of their sorrowful complaints! But now they inhabit the pits of the earth, and their beauty is no more: the worms devour them; the tooth of decay gnaws them, they dissolve by degrees in the bowels of the earth; they will remain there until that moment when they shall retake a new life. Those whom Love or Friendship had attached to them come each day to visist their tombs; they weep, they lament, they groan over the stones heaped upon their Sepulchres: they stain their cheeks with the dust which the showers have moistened; in vain they call those dear Princes, they receive no answer except the echo of the empty rock; today they visit the tombs of their companions, tomorrow some one will visit their own; such are the decrees and arrangements of Providence."

SECTION V.

Of their moral Poems.

The Eastern Nations have always been renowned for the excellent method, they follow in their pieces of morality in ingeniously blending the agreeable with the instructive. Their Poems are filled with noble sentiments such as the following:

"Ask him who reproaches me, with my change of fortune; can Fate abase him who has not been elevated? dost thou not see the reeds float upon the surface of the sea, whilst the pearls remain at the bottom? see, the wind which blows on all sides only destroys the high trees. Of all the branches of the groves the traveller only breaks those which are loaded with fruit. There are Stars without number in the firmament, but the Sun and Moon alone experience Eclipses."

We will add to this example the verses upon the utility of travelling, which are mentioned in the Arabian Tales.

"Travel, and thou wilt find new pleasures which will replace those which thou losest. Change thy dwelling place, for there are pleasures in changing. I know nothing more agreeable, or more desirable than to travel; leave thy habitation and depart. Dost thou not see the water which is without motion, stagnant, and that it is not sweet and clear, except whilst it flows and follows its course. If the sun remain-

ed always fixed in the same part of the Heavens, the human race would be fatigued with his benevolent rays. If the moon did not conceal herself under the clouds, she would not agreeably strike the sight by her unforeseen splendour. The Lion would not know how to tear his prey in pieces if he did not issue from his den. The arrow would not reach the mark if it did not leave the bow. Gold in the mines is no more estimated than straw, and the Aloes wood is no more than a common wood in the soil in which it grows."

There are many other works in all the Asiatick Languages upon moral subjects, of which the most esteemed are the Pendnamch of Attar, and the excellent works of Sadi.

(*To be continued.*)

For The Port Folio.

EPISTOLARY.

Original letter from the celebrated Dr. Beattie, to Dr. C. Nisbet, late principal of Carlisle College, Pennsylvania.

Peterhead, 2d July, 1792.

Dear Sir,

I cannot tell you how much I am gratified by your very kind remembrance of me, and how much I have been entertained by your two excellent letters. Be assured, that, though a dilatory writer, I am not conscious of any diminution in my affection for you; that I often think of you; and that, when I meet with any of our common friends, I often speak of you in terms which you would not dislike. For reasons that will occur to yourself, I cannot give a particular detail of the reflections suggested by the very interesting information with which you have favoured me: I shall only say, that it coincides exactly with the conjectures I had formed, and the intelligence I have received from some others; and that my principles on the subjects in question are the same with yours. You are pleased to speak favourably of the first volume of Elements of Moral Science; the second is now in the hands of the printer: I will endeavour to send you both. What I have said, in the second, on the slavery of the negroes, and on the principles of politicks, will not please every body: but I have honestly given the sentiments which I have been teaching and pondering for thirty years and upwards: and they are sentiments, in which, the more I see and hear of this changeable world, I am the more confirmed. I need not give you any of the publick news of this country: you will see all that in the newspapers. Our national prosperity is just now greater than I have ever known it; and nothing is wanting to make us a very happy people, but a right sense of that prosperity, and gratitude to that good Providence who bestows it. But we are evil and unthankful; and too many of us are not only discontented, but turbulent. Both in religion and in politicks we are pestered with foolish theories; the effect of levity and ignorance. If we would read more Greek and Latin, and less French, more histories and fewer novels, and if we would speak less, and think more, it would be a good thing for us. The theories of the present time often put me in mind of that old sophist (you will remember his name though I do not) who took it upon him to give Hannibal a lecture on the military art. The harangue was much admired by the authour, and such of his audience as knew nothing of practical tacticks: the Carthagenian bluntly said, that he never before had met with a blockhead, so ignorant and so conceited.

You will be glad to hear, that my sister and her son and daughter are in their usual health: my brother-in-law, now in his 86th year, though he has been confined to bed these five years, eats well, and sleeps well, and is perfectly easy, contented, and happy. Socinianism flourishes mightily at Montrose: the ———, who are all become authours, are the great apostles of that church. Our old friend ——— died last winter of a fever. His son, who is in a very thriving way, offered to supply him with as much gin and porter as he could swallow; but the heroick Charles wandered from alehouse to alehouse, and tippled to the end of the chapter.

Of myself I have nothing good to say. That old vertigo in my head (as you have often told me) will never leave me till I am dead. But I have so many other complaints that I cannot expect to be long here. About eighteen months ago, I was visited with an affliction, which, though I am entirely resigned to the will of Providence, has broken my heart. My son (wb m you will remember) died at that time of a consumption. His illness lasted a year, during which I was always with him. He had every advantage that could be derived from affectionate attendants and able physicians, and every thing was procured for him that the faculty recommended; but all was vain. The King appointed him my assistant in the college five years ago, and an able assistant he was. Indeed, to all, who were well acquainted with him, he was the object of admiration and delight. The inscription which I wrote for his tombstone contains his character in brief, and I assure you without any exaggeration. It is in these words:

JACOBO HAY BEATTIE, Jacobi filio:
Philosoph. in Acad. Marischal. Professori.
Adolescenti,
Ea modestia,
Ea suavitate morum,
Ea benevolentia erga omnes,
Ea erga Deum pietate,
Ut humanum nihil supra.
In bonis literis,
In theologia,
In omni philosophia;
Exercitatissimo,
Poetæ insuper,
Rebus in levioribus faceto,
In grandioribus sublimi.
Qui placidam animam efflavit XIX,
Novemb. MDCCXC,
Annos habens XXII, diesque XIII.
Pater mœrens hoc marmor posuit.

I have collected and arranged as many of his papers, as will justify every particular of this character; and intend, for the use of my friends, to print sixty or a hundred copies, one of which will be sent to you. It will be either one pretty large volume, or two small ones, and, if I live, will be put to the press next winter. The epitaph touches upon the more important parts only of his character, but I will take the liberty to inform you further, that he was an able chymist, botanist, anatomist, profoundly skilled in the theory of musick, an excellent performer on the violin, and organ, an elegant drawer, a master of Greek and Latin, a proficient in the French tongue, an admirable publick speaker, expert in fishing, fowling, and fencing, and such a mechanick, that two years before his death he superintended the building of a very good organ for himself. In wit and humour he was not inferiour to you; and though his piety, modesty, and delicacy, were exemplary, he retained, even when he came to be a man, all the cheerfulness and playfulness of a boy. His poems are partly English and partly Latin; for he composed with equal ease in both languages. He foresaw his death long before it came, and met it with true Christian meekness and resignation. All this may seem extraordinary; but it is all literally true, as many persons now alive can testify.

I send this under cover to my friend the Bishop of London who will frank it as far as his privilege extends, that is, I suppose to Falmouth.

With best wishes to Mrs. Nisbet, and your family, I ever am,

dear sir, your affectionate
humble servt.

J. BEATTIE.

Rev. Dr. Nisbet,
Principal of Carlisle College,
Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Academy

OF THE FINE ARTS.

The Academy of Fine Arts has received an important aid in the loan of sixteen pictures for the term of one year; those works, the property of Robert Fulton, are in the most exquisite style of painting, and are now exhibited at the academy where publick curiosity and a fine taste may be gratified.

The first picture thirteen feet long by ten high, the figures as large as life painted by our immortal countryman West. It represents King Lear in the storm and at the entrance of the hovel. This work is in the most heroick and poetick style of composition, the grandeur which is displayed in the figure of the greyheaded old man; his distress, approaching to madness, contrasted with the calmness and kind attentions of his friends Glocester and Kent; the silly indifference of the fool, and the sullen melancholy of Mad Tom, are admirably conceived; the drawing and drapery of this picture have never been surpassed by any artist; the colouring is very fine, the clair obscure well observed, the burst of lightning and glare of torch light, through the storm of rain and gloom of night produce an *effect*, a *tout ensemble* which cannot be described and must be seen to be sensibly felt and understood.

The companion to this picture is of the same size and is also painted by Mr. West. It is taken from a scene in Hamlet, representing Ophelia before the king and queen, who seated on the throne, appear struck with conscious guilt; the beautiful Ophelia is one of the most elegant figures we have ever seen, she is robed in white, her flaxen locks hang in loose disorder over her forehead and down to her waist; with her left hand extended she carelessly strews around her the rue and thyme; while her eyes exhibit a wandering of mind and a delirious indecision. Yet she is mild and gentle, rage makes no part of her character, in her we contemplate the most beautiful and interesting of her sex, whose sensibility has bereaved an elegant mind of reason; and we feel inclined so sympathize in all her sorrows.

In these works, the Lear possesses the boldness, grandeur and dignity of a mind accustomed to command, &c. The Ophelia has all the softness and delicacy of execution which is necessary to the female character.

These two paintings are in the true style of classick composition, and while they excite the highest respect for the talents of the artist, they reflect great honour on the genius of our country, they are of themselves a basis for forming a good taste in our new school of art.

The third picture is painted by Mr. West's eldest son Raphael, and is the only one which he ever executed of the size. It is from the play "As you like it," representing Orlando and Oliver in the forest. This picture has something very original—it approaches to the style of Salvator Rosa, is well imagined, finely drawn and boldly executed. On examining it we have lament that the world is not in possession of more of the works of this gentleman, for his genius is certainly of the highest order.

The next are the Columbiad Paintings, eleven in number, taken from different scenes in that elegant and patriotick poem of Joel Barlow, lately published in this city. They are each thirteen and an half inches long, by ten and an half inches wide, painted by Smirke, and in a style of delicacy and high finish, which has not been seen in this country; the compositions are sublime and poetick, the colouring rich, the tonings warm and harmonious; these works relating chiefly to the history of our country are extremely interesting and may be considered as gems in the art.

Added to these is a portrait of Mr. and Mrs. West in one picture, painted by Mr. West —also a portrait of Mr. Fulton, painted by Mr. West; they are executed in a masterly style

The *Angel appearing to the shepherds* by Pynaker is a most charming work for effect and transparency.

The *Troubadour*, playing on the violin, by Skalkin, is good.

The slaughtered bullock by Ostade, a very curious piece of still life.

The Flemish boors by Brower.

Portrait of an old man by Ravintine, curious for its high finish.

Adam and Eve, and the death of Abel is by an Italian artist, whose name we cannot announce at present.

The Earl of Stanhope and a portrait of Joel Barlow, Esq. by Robert Fulton, Esq.

In addition to the above are a number of fine paintings belonging to Mr. Lichleightner, and on sale.

For The Port Folio.

CLASSICAL LEARNING.

(*Continued from page 77.*)

A SHORT ACCOUNT AND CHARACTER of the PRINCIPAL CLASSICK AUTHOURS.

Homer, the father of Poetry, and the most ancient heathen authour extant, was born before the use of letters was generally known in Greece. The obscurity of his condition, and the wandering life he led has rendered the place of his birth very uncertain, though the fame of his works made seven famous cities contend for him, each claiming him as their countryman. Smyrna, Rhodes, Colophon, Salamis, Chios, Argos and Athens, at once pretending to this honour. Though possessed of the highest reputation and authority after his death, he seems to have been little noticed in his lifetime, from the great uncertainty of the place where he lived and died. Such has been the fate of poets, and of many others who have deserved well of human society, though neglected and unknown in their lifetime, the world has done justice to their merits when dead. *Virtutem incolumem odimus*, &c. Great as Homer's fame has long been, few particulars of his life are preserved or even invented. Even in the age of Herodotus, the most ancient Historian of Greece, who wrote a book on the life and country of Homer, little that concerned him could be gleaned from records or tradition. The people of Smyrna, a Greek city in lesser Asia, pretend that he received his education, if not his birth, in their city, and preserved long, with particular veneration, a building which they named Homercum, or the School of Homer. Some authours reject the claims of all the contending cities, and maintain that Homer was a Babylonian. Whatever be in this conjecture, it seems pretty certain that Homer's fame was earlier heard of in Asia, than in any part of Greece, and that his poems were sung by the rhapsodists in the Greek cities there, till Lycurgus collected them and brought them into Greece. Were we to judge of former ages by our own, we would reckon it almost impossible that such voluminous works as the Iliad and the Odyssey could be preserved in the frail memories of men, and communicated through several ages by tradition only, but when we consider the industry of early ages, and the sacred regard they paid to poetry, when we reflect that the rhapsodists were a particular class of men who had no other business than getting by heart and repeating verses, and that all the learning of rude ages consisted in poetry and was conveyed by tradition, we need not think it incredible that so large compositions as those of Homer were preserved in that manner.—Some contend that Homer must have known letters, because in one of the hymns attributed to him, he is described as meditating his verses, holding his book on his knees: but not to mention that Homer past the greatest part of his life in the state of blindness, and consequently could make no use of a book either for writing or reading, it is much more probable that the Hymn in question is the production of a later age, as we find nothing of Homer's fire in it, than that he knew letters, who has never once mentioned them in any part of his works, the Σηματα λυγρα of Bellerophon, mentioned in the Iliad, appears rather to have been a piece of hieroglyphick or allegorical painting, rather than a combination of alphabetical characters, similar to the embroidered representation of the Trojan war, which he tells us that Helen delineated in her web, or the histories of the middle age, represented in tapestry. But we are more concerned with Homer as a poet than as a man. Though apparently destitute of the most effectual means of perpetuating his name, he has raised himself a monument more durable than the storied urn and animated bust. The Trojan war, the most ancient publick event almost that ancient tradition notices, supplied him most happily with a subject. The fame of that singular event, and the reputation of the heroes engaged in it, were probably fresh in the memories of men in Homer's time, though it is generally believed that he was not born till 130 years after its conclusion. On the ground-work of this story he has erected an edifice that has been already so fortunate as to possess the applause of thirty successive centuries of years. The vastness of Homer's genius, his comprehensive mind, the soft and pliable nature of the language in which he wrote, the popular traditions of the gods with which he has adorned his poems, and the immense knowledge of human nature displayed in them, combine to raise our admiration of a man, who, for aught we know, had no predecessour

from whom he could borrow, and who has had so few rivals, even in so great a lapse of time and improvement of science. It seems something strange that poetry should have come into the world perfect, though all other sciences rose from imperfect and weak elements, and were improved and enlarged by length of time. Aristotle appears evidently to have formed his rules of poetry and canons of criticism, merely from the practice of Homer, and considers other poets as perfect only in so far as they resembled him. The age in which Homer lived, appears to have been very rude and simple in its manners, and even his heroes appear to have been but a few removes from the savage state; yet he has contrived to adorn them with all the virtues compatible with that state. Magnanimity, generosity, the attachment to kindred, and subjection to order are represented as equally belonging to Greeks and Trojans, though it is easy to discern that the first were in a state of much higher civilization than the latter. Yet much of the savage state is discernible. They slaughtered their prisoners in cold blood, and offered them as sacrifices at the tombs of their heroes. Achilles drags the body of Hector thrice round the walls of Troy, and the whole Grecian army wantonly wound and insult the dead body of a man whom they had so much dreaded when alive.—The religion of Homer is generally commendable, though he adopted the belief of a multiplicity of deities, which he is erroneously supposed to have feigned, yet his Father of gods and men, possesses a decided superiority and controls the others in the language and manner of a Sovereign. The conflict of human passions which cost the life of so many heroes, is represented only as the fulfilment of the counsels of Jupiter. He is represented as loving justice, and punishing injustice, even in those whom he was most disposed to favour, and to behold and overrule all the transactions of men. Homer's Heroes always profess reverence to the gods and submission to their will, though they seem sometimes to upbraid them. They set about their most solemn and publick actions with prayer, or acknowledge the Deity before their meals, by sacrifices and libations. They profess to despise falsehood and dissimulation, though Ulysses is honoured for his wiles and deceit. Government and subordination are uniformly respected, and Achilles did not think proper to resist the authority of Agamemnon even when highly provoked by his injustice. Ulysses declares for monarchical government, which prevailed in Greece many ages after the time of Homer. The liberty of Greece was achieved by the death of their tyrants, who no longer possessed the virtues of their predecessours. The speeches which Homer attributes to his heroes, are extremely animated, proper, and suitable to their character, age and situation. The loquaciousness of Nestor and Priam, the vehemence of Achilles, the pride of Agamemon, the deliberate and dignified valour of Hector and Sarpedon, the cunning of Ulysses, the roughness of Ajax, the boldness of Diomede, and the insolence of Thersites are most graphically and distinctly described. Even Paris, under all his effeminacy and taste for pleasure, so fatal to his country and kindred, preserves notwithstanding the dignity of a hero, and appears in the field, though his valour appears to be tempered by timidity and circumspection. In fine, Homer introduces his readers to the acquaintance of his heroes, and sets them before us as acting with strict propriety and suitableness to their several characters, but while the heroes follow their several attachments, and contend with hostile passions, every event is represented as happening by the intervention of the gods. The plague is brought into the Grecian camp by the arrows of Apollo, in revenge for the insult done by Agamemnon to his priest Chryses. Venus rescues Paris, and Apollo, Æneas, from the danger of death. Neptune and Apollo destroy the ditch and wall of the Grecian camp, which had been made without acknowledging the gods. Minerva destroys Ajax the son of Oileus, who had profaned her temple, she likewise turns aside the darts that were aimed at her favourites. Thetis consults the honour of her son Achilles, provides him with armour, and at last warns him of his unavoidable and approaching fate. Jupiter protects his son Sarpedon, and Venus, Æneas, in the hour of danger. The greatest regard is shown to dreams, omens, oracles, and prophecies, which were supposed to be indications of the will of the gods. Mankind have always been so fond of prying into futurity, that in every age they have endeavoured to persuade themselves that the knowledge of it was attainable. Yet a pernicious dream is sent by Jove to deceive Agamemnon, which is a proof that the ancients had an idea of malevolent spirits. Homer introduced or invented what is called epick or heroick poetry, and the rules and definition of it has been taken from his works. Instead of relating the war of Troy, from the beginning, in the manner of historians, though there were no historians then, the action of the Iliad begins only about six weeks before the death of Hector, with which it closes. The beginning and former transactions of the war being afterwards introduced in form of narration. Instead of relating the whole of the war, he proposes only to relate what evils the anger of Achilles did to the Greeks, *Iratus quantum*, &c.

Nor does he relate the taking of Troy, but lets us know that it was to happen soon after Hector s death. And his plan has been considered as the standard of epick poetry since his time. The return of Ulysses is the theme of the Odyssey, but though that was the work of years, Homer begins his narrative and action, a short time before his return, and introduces the anterior events in the narrations given to Telemachus by Nestor and Menelaus, and that of Ulysses himself to Alcinous. The Iliad has been thought superiour to the Odyssey, perhaps because men as well as boys, are fonder of war and battles, than of the less noisy occurrences of peace. Longinus assents to this opinion, and imagines that Homer composed the Odyssey in his old age, which he owns however, in his manner of speaking, to be the old age of Homer. In both poems he displays the most accurate acquaintance with human nature, and whether he recites the speeches of Jupiter to the assembly of the gods, or that of Eumæus the swine-herd, to Ulysses in the disguise of a beggar, every thing is strictly in character, and every person speaks according to their rank, and situation in life, as well as suitably to the occasion of their speaking. The poet himself is scarcely seen, as the muse is supposed in compliance with the invocation, to relate the story, and the heroes speak for themselves. Homer mentions himself only once in all his works, though not by name, but took care that his work should bear such marks of genius, and greatness of sentiment that mankind should inquire and remember his name without his telling it. Virgil, on the contrary, has inserted his name, in his 4th Georgick, though seemingly in passing, as if afraid that it should be forgotten, a proof that on this occasion the vanity of the poet got the better of the modesty of the man. Herodotus and Thucydides, the most ancient Greek historians, introduce their names and country in the beginning of their narration, and make the title the first paragraph of their histories. Homer appears equally great in every part of his work, and whether he relates the consultation of the gods, the events of war, or the arts of peace, whether he describes the works of Nature or those of art, he is always at home and equal to his subject. The repetitions in Homer, may to some, be disgusting, but when considered without the prejudices of modern times, appear to be an exact imitation of nature. A faithful messenger will relate his message in the very words in which he receives it, and such are all Homer's messengers, rarely taking the liberty of abridging or adding anything to it. As to those lines that occur so often, they may be considered as mere expletives or indications of the change of persons, and it would have been ridiculous for Homer to have invented as many modes of introduction, as there were speeches in the course of his works. The description of the ritual of sacrifice occurs commonly in the same words, but when we consider that the form was fixed by ancient and general custom, and the action considered as the most sacred, and not of human institution, we ought not to be surprised that it is always narrated in the same words. Homer's description of visible objects may seem astonishing in a blind man, but besides that it is probable that Homer lost his sight in middle life, after his ideas were formed and his knowledge increased. Our own times afford an instance, a poet too, Dr. Blacklock whose descriptions of visible objects, though he was blind from his infancy, may induce us to believe what is related of Homer. His similies are exceeding exact, and though sometimes redundant in number, yet never in circumstances. The genius and taste of a poet are manifested by the choice of his similies, the time of their introduction, and by seizing the chief circumstances of the thing described, instead of enumerating them all. It is in this respect that poetry principally resembles painting, where by a few strokes happily chosen and correctly drawn, a likeness is happily hit off without attending to minute circumstances. Homer excelled in describing human nature, and enters with the greatest propriety into the spirit and passions of his heroes. He makes them always say what they ought, and never too little or too much for their character and situation. He professes the belief of a future state of rewards and punishments, and in the vision of Ulysses in the Odyssey, describes the mansion and state of the dead according to the popular belief of that age. It is observed that he succeeds much better in describing the state of punishments, than that of rewards, and that Homer's Elysium is not a place of happiness, as Achilles tells Ulysses in the shades, thathe would rather choose to be the servant of a poor man on earth, than reign over all the ghosts in Elysium. But it is no wonder that Homer should have been unhappy in this respect, as Virgil, who lived in a much more enlightened age, represents his heroes as following the same employments in Elysium, which they were known to have followed on earth ; namely military exercises, runing, driving chariots, breaking horses, hunting, &c. So that a great critick observes, that Virgil's description of Elysium is borrowed from the Campus Martius of Rome, where the Roman youth exercised themselves and their horses on holidays. But we ought not to wonder that the exercises of happy souls, which Divine Revelation describes mostly by negatives and general expressions,

should have been so unhappily imagined by heathen poets. We may rather learn a lesson from their descriptions, which they certainly did not design by them, viz. that that character and those habits which are formed in this life, will last forever; and that those whose affections are set only on earthly and trifling things in the present life, will pine for the want of them forever in the future state, which should enhance to us the value of a good education, and an early taste for those pleasures that depend not on the present world.

(*To be continued.*)

For The Port Folio.

THE LAY PREACHER.

"Also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him and comforted him over all the evils that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold."

Of all the Dramatick poems, with which readers of taste and sensibility have been delighted and instructed, the book of Job is unquestionably the most pathetick, sublime, and beautiful. The dialogue is in the noblest style of composition, and the interlocutors are all remarkable for character, manners, and sentiment. The fable is extremely artful and well supported, and the moral such as must challenge the approbation of every virtuous mind. He who is habitually negligent of his bible, or indifferent to the charms of the Oriental muse, will hardly be persuaded, that the Book of Job abounds with entertainment as well as instruction. But the fact is indisputable and the politest scholars and the most rigorous criticks have dwelt with a rapture, which they felt, upon the beauties of this incomparable performance.

The personage, whose name gives a title to the work, is represented as an Eastern Nobleman of consummate wisdom, ardent piety, and unbounded wealth. He is neither insolent in prosperity, nor abject in adversity. His character is emphatically described as *perfect*. Studious of the Divine favour, and blind to all the blandishments of vice, he walked so uprightly in a noble and undeviating course of rectitude that he was universally regarded as the standard of integrity. He was perfectly pure from every taint of avarice, voluptuousness, hypocrisy, vanity, and ambition. He is neither ostentatious, envious, nor revengeful. His hospitality was princely, his justice exemplary, and his charities innumerable. He is a tender parent, a generous master, a constant friend, and a benevolent man. He was a father to the poor, the champion of the oppressed, the advocate of innocence, the guardian of orphans, and a physician to the lame and blind. In short, to use his own brilliant and energetick expressions, he put on righteousness and it clothed him. His judgment was as a robe and a diadem. He caused the widow's heart to sing for joy, and the poor man was warmed with the fleece of his sheep.

But neither a prosperous fortune, nor a magnificent expenditure, nor a blameless life are a sure protection against the vicissitudes of Nature, the ravages of Disease, or the visitation of Melancholy. While Job was thus basking in the meridian of Happiness, while he enjoyed favour with God, and popularity among men; while his palaces glittered with the gold of Ophir, the precious Onyx, and the Sapphire; Coral and Pearls, the ruddiest of rubies, and the Topaz of Ethiopia, a terrible visitation is impending. The genius of Misfortune appears before his distract-

ed eyes in the most horrible form that *Fables yet have feigned, or Fear conceived.* In one hour, his wealth vanished, his servants were slain, and his children consumed. To add to this gloomy catalogue of woes, his body is not only tormented with the scourge of Sickness, but his mind is clouded with all the darkness of Despair.

In this mournful reverse of circumstances, one, who took but a hasty glance at Human Nature, and who partially looked only at one side, would naturally conclude, that Job would be immediately surrounded by crowds, impatient to testify their opinion of his value, and their sorrow and solace for his sufferings. As he was a man of genius, wisdom, and eloquence; as he had been a character of so much distinction, that he was the companion of Princes, and the oracle of the people, as he was a Nobleman, a Judge, an Oratour, and a Statesman, he had the strongest claim upon the gratitude of some, the friendship of others and the compassion of all. Let us now count this army of auxiliaries coming to the support of suffering virtue. We shall not laboriously task our arithmetick. Of that swarm, which once buzzed in his courts, and hovered in his palaces, who quaffed the richest of his wines, and anointed themselves in rivers of his oil, only *three* individuals remain, and this scanty group, so far from pouring balm on his tortured mind, assail him in the angriest terms of reproach and controversy; and, in a spirit of captious sophistry, which would disgrace the most illiberal of mankind, cavil at every chapter of his life. Instead of being run after by admiring thousands, instead of witnessing a multitude banquetting at his table, instead of being surrounded with obsequious guests, and fawning dependents, he finds himself on a sudden in the dismal company of Solitude and Contempt. The same gust of adversity, which had made a wreck of his fortune and his peace, had blown away all his friends, connexions and companions too, and on a raging ocean he finds himself joyless, and alone, and on the very gulf of Despair.

Like April skies, life is coquetish, capricious, and changeable. Prosperity and Adversity often succeed each other, like the vicissitudes of day and night. The unhappy sufferer, whom we have just left in an abyss of misfortunes, suddenly emerges, by the favour of Divine Providence, and his last days are fairer than the first. Having exercised a patience unparalelled, and displayed a *conscience void of offence*, his integrity is justly and graciously requited by a most magnificent reward. His fortune was doubled, and his family favoured. Honours and gifts await him. But is it necessary for me to record, with the minuteness of an annalist, this *second* epoch in this good man's history? Is it not already indicated, as it were with a pen of diamond, by the circumstance in the text? Is it not clear, as noontide beams, that our patient hero must have regained his rank in society, and become "a prosperous gentleman," before his brethren and his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance *before*, would come and eat bread with him, and bemoan him, and comfort him? During the gloomy season of his sufferings, we do not hear one syllable of these sunshine friends. Lover and friend were not put far away, but kept far away. No brother, nor sister, nor old acquain-

tance, nor grateful friend, nor pampered guest, nor faithful servant, ever dreamed of visiting Job in poverty and affliction. Suddenly Fortune smiles, and who then more smiling than the servile and parisitical followers of Fortune? The indigent Job is alone, the affluent Job is overwhelmed with the civilities of crowds. Not only his family friends and domestick retainers are officious in their visits, but every man gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. As Jaques in the play finely remarks

——They made a testament
As worldlings do, giving their sum of more
To that, which had too much——

There was a time, when Job *sat down among the ashes*, that, so far from receiving money gratuitously, he could not have borrowed a piece of silver, no not on usury. But when his coffers and caskets are once more replenished, all the gold of the Orientals is showered upon him.

Having incidentally alluded to a passage in the immortal SHAKSPEARE, I cannot refrain from recommending to my classical readers, the perusal, in connexion with my text, of that admirable drama, Timon of Athens. The story of that prodigal nobleman, compared with that of the patient Job, deserted by his friends, at his utmost need, and courted by them, during a reverse of fortune, will present such a picture of human nature, as neither Hobbes nor Mandeville would hope to emulate with the hardest pencils and the darkest colouring.

For The Port Folio.

BIOGRAPHY.

In several numbers of this paper, we have insisted, at considerable length, upon the delight, that a great majority of our readers of an inquisitive humour and delicate taste, always experience, in perusing the lives of distinguished men. At no very remote distance of time, we stipulated with the publick that Biography should form a regular article in this Journal. It imports us to *pay our vows*. Indeed, an article so agreeable to the humour of the Editor, as well as interesting to the curiosity of his friends, should not have been postponed, for a week, if we could have readily found a choice of valuable articles, sufficiently *portable* for this miscellany. But ADDISON could not *hate long speeches* more heartily, than the publick detest prolixity, in a paper of the complexion of The Port Folio. On inspecting many recent publications, and consulting many Biographical Dictionaries, we found ourselves embarrassed too often with the copiousness of our materials, and began almost to despair of discovering these little medallions of character, for which the French are so famous, and which are so finely calculated, to pursue the allusion, for the narrow room which we can assign them. At length, we have found a collection of lives written in a terse style and abounding with anecdote. To add to our satisfaction it is upon the model of Granger's admirable work, and comprizes one of the most interesting epochs of literature, we mean the Augustan age of England, in which flourished an ADDISON, a SWIFT, and a BOLINGBROKE. Our authority is of a very recent date, and we are indebted for these pleasing articles to the industry of a worthy clergyman, and respectable authour, the domestick chaplain to the Earl of Leicester.

We commence this gallery of portraits with a sketch of the romantick character of the versatile Earl of Peterborough, of whom SWIFT so justly sung:

MORDANTO FILLS THE TRUMP OF FAME.

Charles Mordaunt, third Earl of Peterborough, and first of Monmouth, was one of the strangest compounds that Nature, in her most sportive moments, ever produced. Of great ancestry, a peer by creation as well as, afterwards, by descent; yet in his youth, he seemed to disregard decency, and the greatest of all moral obligations. Justice, indeed, ought to have claimed him, as one who shed human blood. Graceful in his manners, elegant in his person, and a favourite with the Muses, he seemed emulous to mix only with the rough and then untutored brave tars of the ocean. Leaving the naval ser-

vice, he charmed a listening senate with his oratory. Disgusted with James II's government, he went to command part of the Dutch fleet, but William III brought him back to his native land; when we find him a *military* officer, yet assisting his majesty in the council. Under Ann he fought and conquered; and Spain would have been transferred from the Bourbon to the Austrian family, if Charles had as much attended to fighting as bull-feasting. Never was a general more brave or more skilful. An adept in the illusions of perspective, he imposed upon the enemy as to the numbers under his command; even his gallantries aided his plans. He astonished the proud Spaniards and the patient Germans; even the spritely French saw themselves excelled in courage, celerity, and stratagem. The parliament thanked him; but imitating his fickleness, withdrew their favour. Ever at home, his pen vindicated his sword; and, at the change of the queen's ministry, he blazed forth a knight of the garter; and as negotiator in all the Italian courts. Restless and alert on the continent or in England, he was ever on the wing: "he saw more kings and postillions than any man in Europe." This quarter of the globe seemed to him too confined for his pastimes. He asked a commission as captain-general of our forces in North America, but his enemy and rival Marlborough prevented his gaining it. Under George I and George II he became a conspicuous whig, and was continued by their majesties lord lieutenant of Northamptonshire, and made general of the marine forces of Great Britain; but, in these reigns he employed his time more as a wit than a politician. Caprice dictated and inclination followed. He was insufferably haughty, and loved popularity. The correspondent of Pope and Swift, and gifted in all that learning and genius could bestow, he yet delighted to hear himself declaim in a coffeehouse, where the stupid stare of astonishment was all his reward. Living on the borders of parsimony, yet always in debt. They who blamed, could not help admiring him: even the cynick Swift, after remarking, that "though his lordship was at least sixty, he had more spirits than any young fellow in England," adds, "I love the hangdog dearly." An avowed athiest, he gained the admiration of the friends of revealed religion. He was like no other human being; yet all human beings admired his sense, his wit, and his courage. As a single variety in the species, he was said to be without fear. "No," said his lordship, "I am not; but I never saw occasion to fear." He died of a flux, at Lisbon, October 25, 1735, aged 77. By Carey, daughter of Sir Alexander Frazier, of Dotes, in the county of Mearns in Scotland, he had John, Lord Mordaunt, father of Charles, the fourth earl of Peterborough; Henry, a distinguished sea-officer; and Henrietta, married to Alexander Gordon, second duke of Gordon. His lordship, when a widower, became deeply enamoured with the accomplished Anastasia Robinson,* daughter of Mr. Robinson, a painter; who though an opera singer, a teacher of musick and the Italian language, to support an aged parent, rejected all his advances tending to an illicit connexion. This proud and singular man, dreading a total loss of the fair Anastasia, married her privately, and concealed the circumstance; till, in 1735, he publickly owned what most people knew before: he then proclaimed his marriage like no other husband. He went one evening to the rooms at Bath, where a servant was ordered distinctly and audibly to exclaim, "Lady Peterborough's carriage waits." Every lady of rank and fashion rose, and congratulated the declared countess.

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* Mr. Robinson resided in or near Golden-square; he had studied his profession in Italy, and understanding the language, had taught it his daughter Anastasia when young, who learned it with great ease and correctness.

TO READERS.

Next to periodical essays, and the biography of the learned, for which not only ourselves, but the great majority of our readers have a strong and just partiality, we have always admired tours and travels, not in Africa, nor among the naked barbarians of the west, but among those nations, who have distinguished themselves by the blandishments of life, by softness and civility of manners, by the pursuits of literature and the efforts of Genius and Art. Hence the mountains of Burgundy, the banks of the Seine, the lake of Lausanne, the vales of the Arno, and the shores of the Mediterranean, however described, will always fix the attention of inquisitive man. To this stock of useful and pleasing information we have it in our power to make a very copious, elegant, and interesting addition. An American gentleman of superiour talents, liberal education, and extensive views has favoured us with his manuscript travels through one of the most charming and civilized sections of the European continent. As these travels abound not only with vivid descriptions, but with amusing anecdotes, and judicious reflections, and as from the merit of the subject, as well as of the execution, the work deserves a conspicuous place in a Journal, whose object is to preserve some records of the literature of our country; we have determined to publish these letters regularly, and to permit them to occupy the first place in The Port Folio. During the first year of the establishment of this paper, we were favoured, by a man of genius, and a diplomatick character of rank, with his travels in Silesia. These, though descriptive of a quarter of Europe, comparitively obscure, were so favourably received by the American publick, that no article in the Editor's power to furnish was read with more avidity. As soon as the series was completed an elegant edition was immediately published by a British bookseller, and a clear majority of unbiassed criticks have pronounced their verdict in our Tourist's favour. On a careful inspection of the letters, which adorn our front pages. we have not a doubt that they too, will receive the honours of popularity at home, and of publication abroad.

For The Port Folio.

SONG. AIR "VIVA TUTTA."

By the brook that's softly flowing,
When the evening breeze is blowing,
When the Sun has press'd his pillow,
Deep beneath the distant billow,
Then it's sweet alone to stray.

Thoughts of thee my maid entrancing,
Absence every charm enhancing,
Then I rove till break of day.

There is much point in the following Epigram.

A Cock, within a stable pent,
Was strutting o'er a heap of dung,
And still as round and round he went,
The mettled courser stampt and flung.

Bravo! quoth he, a decent noise,
We make a tolerable pother;
But let's take care my merry boys,
We tread not upon one another.

MERRIMENT.

A country gentleman being complimented on the appearance of his horses, and being told they were in excellent plight, said, "To be sure, how should it be otherwise? they eat such hay and oats, that the king himself never ate better."

A Bishop, congratulating a poor parson, said he lived in a very fine air: "Yes Sir," replied he, "I should think it so, if I could live upon it, as well as in it."

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